

Wyoming On Wellness

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"Commit to Your Health"

WINTER 2009

Employee Wellness Program

The new employee wellness program, *Healthier WY* has been up and running since October 2008. So far, we have over 5,000 participants in the program. If you have not registered for the program, log onto www.healthierwy.org to participate and get involved in the program. This Website also has details on the health insurance premium discount for 2010.

One component of this program is to complete the *Wellness Insurance Premium Discount* form. (You should have received this form in the mail at your home address.) Take the form to your personal licensed healthcare provider. Have an annual wellness physical, have your physician sign the form, then mail it back in the envelope provided.

If you do not have this form or have misplaced it, please contact Tammy Till at 777-6716 or ttill@state.wy.us.

A reminder: This program is only available to participants in Employees' Group Insurance Health Plan with Great-West.

Healthy babies

All women who could get pregnant, not just those who know they are already pregnant, should consume at least 400 mcg of folic acid every day.

An important B vitamin, folic acid (also called folate) greatly reduces the risk of neural tube birth defects. It's important to build up your blood levels at least four weeks before getting pregnant. Taking a daily multi-vitamin or eating a fortified cereal with 400 mcg per serving is an easy way to get enough folic acid.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; The March of Dimes

Glaucoma Awareness



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eating well

Shopping list

Stock your pantry with the basics for healthy cooking:

- ✓ Onions, garlic, shallots
- ✓ Olive oil, balsamic vinegar
- ✓ Dried whole-wheat bread crumbs
- ✓ Dijon mustard
- ✓ Low-sodium chicken and beef broth
- ✓ Brown rice (quick cooking is just as nutritious as regular)
- ✓ Nuts, raisins, dried fruits
- ✓ Canned beans
- ✓ Canned tomatoes and tomato sauce
- ✓ Parmesan cheese
- ✓ Whole-wheat pasta

Garlic chicken

Less than one hour from pantry to plate

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 2 tsp. crushed garlic
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup dry bread crumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese



Preheat oven to 425°F. Warm the garlic and olive oil to blend the flavors. In a separate dish, combine the bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Dip the chicken breasts in the olive oil and garlic mixture, then into the bread crumb mixture. Place in a shallow baking dish. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes, until no longer pink and juices run clear (180°F on a meat thermometer).

Serves 4. Per serving: 306 calories, 31 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 17 g total fat, 4 g saturated fat, 0 g fiber, 251 mg sodium.

Source: www.allrecipes.com

HOME-COOKED FAST FOOD

A survival guide for quick and nutritious meals

- 1. Plan your meals for the week before you go shopping.** Pick up convenient and versatile basics like precut/frozen chicken breasts and precut salads and vegetables in a bag.
- 2. Think about leftovers when planning menus.** Roast chicken or turkey and mashed potatoes can become shepherd's pie. Use leftover roast in chili or stew. Toss extra veggies into an omelet. Make rice pudding with cooked rice.
- 3. Take a little time on your days off to chop veggies you'll need for your recipes.** Store them in small containers and label for the date and meal.
- 4. Make a simple stir-fry with bags of precut vegetables and shrimp or cubed chicken.** Premixed shredded coleslaw also goes well in soups and stir-fries.
- 5. Store chopped onions and peppers in half-cup measures in your freezer for future recipes.** Single servings of meat stored with marinade in a plastic bag also keep well in the freezer. As the meat thaws in a refrigerator, it will absorb the marinade flavors.
- 6. Save time and nutrients — keep the skin on potatoes.** For tasty baked fries: Slice sweet potatoes, lightly spray with olive oil, and bake at 400°F for 15 minutes.
- 7. Fish makes a fast entrée at only 10 minutes per inch of thickness to cook.**

Preserving nutrients in vegetables

Steam vegetables or spray them lightly with olive oil and roast them in a 400°F oven until tender but still firm (approximately 10–15 minutes). Use as little water as possible when cooking vegetables in a microwave or boiling in a pan, since nutrients are lost in water.

fitness

THE ACTIVITY PYRAMID

Build a strong foundation and work your way up

If you live a sedentary life, start with just 10 minutes of activity three times a week.

Gradually work your way up to 30 minutes, five days a week. Adults who have been inactive for a long time should check with a physician before starting an exercise program.

Source: University of Virginia Health System

Cut Down On:

- Television watching
- Computer time
- Sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time

2–3 Times a Week:

Pick activities to stretch and strengthen muscles

- Yoga • Tai chi • Pilates • Weight lifting
- Push-ups • Abdominal exercises

At Least 5 Days a Week:

30 minutes of brisk activity to get your heart pumping

- Walking • Running/jogging • Swimming • In-line skating
- Biking • Hiking • Basketball • Water aerobics • Ballroom dancing

Every Day:

Find simple ways to be more active

- Walk wherever you can • Take the stairs instead of the elevator • Do yardwork or housework at a brisk pace • Park your car far away • Get off the bus a few stops early

9 SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

How to keep your fitness resolutions for the New Year

- 1 Write it down and post it** where you'll see it every day, such as on your refrigerator or computer monitor.
- 2 The first thing in the morning, do something to support your resolution** — even if it's just taking the dog out for an early walk.
- 3 Listen to a motivational tape**, read a self-help book, or take a class on the health habit you want to change.
- 4 Put it in your daily calendar** and make it a priority.
- 5 Post inspiring quotes** in your work area or on your refrigerator.
- 6 Search out different places or environments** to do your resolution to keep it fresh, interesting, and fun.
- 7 Ask for help from family members and friends** who will support your efforts.
- 8 Volunteer to support someone** who is also trying to change their habits. Text messages, e-mails, and phone calls are good ways to send encouragement.
- 9 Start a savings jar or any other reward system** — add a dollar for each day you keep your resolution. Set a goal and reward yourself when you reach it.

health news

Doc Talk

THE ICEBERG BELOW THE WATERLINE: Pre-diabetes

There was a time I would have told patients with a fasting blood glucose level between 120 and 125 mg/dL to watch their diet and increase their physical activity.

However, new guidelines from diabetes specialists now consider this to be pre-diabetes. Full-blown diabetes is a level of 126 mg/dL or above.

People with pre-diabetes have a 500 – 1,500% higher risk of developing full-blown diabetes and can experience the diabetes-related organ damage that can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, and limb amputation.

This new guideline is a wakeup call for physicians and patients alike. Current recommendations include:

1. Blood glucose screening at age 45 or earlier if you are overweight or have a family history of diabetes.
2. If your fasting blood glucose is 126 or higher on two different days, you have diabetes. Talk with your doctor about treatment.
3. If your fasting blood glucose is 100 – 125, you have pre-diabetes. Check your cholesterol and hemoglobin A1c (a measure of long-term blood glucose control) soon after you are diagnosed, then every six months.
4. If you smoke, stop. Treat high blood pressure and high cholesterol aggressively.
5. Ask your doctor about taking a baby aspirin every day.
6. Ask your doctor about improving your diet and increasing your physical activity.

William J. Mayer, MD, MPH
Medical Editor

crime stoppers

Block Watches are one of the most effective and least costly ways to cut down on crime in any type of neighborhood. Everyone can be involved, young and old, single and married, renters and homeowners. The concept can be applied to apartments, businesses, parks, and schools.

Contact your local police or sheriff's department or visit the National Crime Prevention Council at www.ncpc.org for ideas on how to start a block watch.

Crime prevention tip: Landscaping that provides privacy for your home also provides it for a burglar. Keep bushes trimmed down to two feet tall and trim branches off large trees up to seven feet from the ground.

cancer and weight

Except for not smoking, controlling your weight and making healthy food choices are the best things you can do to lower your risk for colon cancer and other types of cancer. One-third of all cancer deaths are linked to diet and lifestyle factors.

A key part of weight control is regular physical activity, so aim for between 30 and 60 minutes every day.

In addition to limiting your total calories, plan menus around fruits and vegetables, whole grains, unsaturated fats, and non-fat dairy products that provide enough calcium and vitamin D. Limit your intake of red meat and refined sugars.

Source: American Cancer Society

bundle up

People with asthma — especially young children — can prevent attacks triggered by inhaling cold air by wearing a special ski mask designed for that purpose.

A heavy scarf, worn loosely over the nose and mouth, can also protect against asthma attacks caused by inhaling cold air.

Although children who control their asthma with proper use of medication can participate in most physical activities, experts recommend that they avoid prolonged or excessive running in cold temperatures.

Source: American Lung Association

cranberry cocktails

Both regular and sugar-free cranberry juice can help prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Cranberry juice increases the acid in urine, so bacteria can't grow as easily, and also makes the bladder slippery so bacteria can't stick to it. Drinking lots of water and urinating when you feel the urge — not waiting — can also help prevent UTIs. Bacteria can grow when urine stays in the bladder too long.

Other ways to stop bacteria that cause UTIs: Urinate soon after sex, avoid tight-fitting underwear, and for women, wipe toward the back after using the bathroom.

Source: National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse

you can use

family time

Eating meals together frequently or just having fun as a family may help teens make healthier lifestyle choices.

Adolescents who spend more time with their families tend to delay having sex, have sex less often, have less unprotected sex, and have fewer partners. Negative and psychologically controlling parenting may actually increase the likelihood of teens having unprotected sex.

In a related study, teenage girls who ate at least five meals a week with their families were 50% less likely to smoke cigarettes or use drugs or alcohol five years later.

Source: Journal of Adolescent Health, Vol. 43, Issue 2, Pg. 133 and Pg. 151

natural cold relief

Use natural remedies like saline (salt-water) nose drops, vaporizers, and a half-teaspoon of honey to help relieve the symptoms of colds and coughs in toddlers.

Over-the-counter cough medicines should not be given to children under four years old.

These medications typically contain a combination of decongestants, antihistamines, and cough suppressants which can cause serious side effects such as increased blood pressure, irregular heart rates, and depressed breathing.

Another word of caution: Avoid giving honey to infants or children under one year old. Their immune systems may not be able to handle any bacteria present in honey.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Food and Drug Administration

buy the product... not the payments

If it's not possible for you to save for something and pay cash for it on the spot, always ask how many payments there will be to get it paid off — and remember to include any charges for interest.

For example, if there was no interest charged, you would pay \$50 per month for five years to pay off an item that cost \$3,000. With an annual interest rate of 9% you would be paying \$62.28 per month, or a total of \$3,736 by the end of five years.

Always ask yourself these four questions when buying anything:

- **Do I really need this now?**
- **How long would it take me to save up** and buy it with no payments?
- **Can I get a good used one** at a much lower price?
- **Is there something cheaper** I can do that would not require payments?

When you do purchase something on payments, you'll save money on interest charges by paying more than the minimum payment each month. If possible, also consider setting up monthly electronic payments to pay the bill automatically. It's easy to forget to pay bills on time, and late charges can be very costly.

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For more information, visit HopeHealth.com

exercise partners

It's always easier to make it to the gym when you have a workout partner waiting for you. But what can you do when you don't have someone to meet in person?

Two health-care workers won a fitness challenge at Group Health Medical Centers in Washington by "meeting at the gym" in separate cities. They did hour-long workouts twice a week while using Bluetooth headsets to talk on their cell phones.

pneumonia shots

A one-time shot to prevent pneumonia is recommended for all people at age 65. While annual flu shots can prevent the flu or reduce its severity, the vaccine does not protect against pneumonia, which can be a complication in severe cases of the flu, especially for seniors.

People with chronic health conditions who may be at severe risk for complications from the flu should talk to their doctor about pneumonia shots prior to age 65.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, *not* to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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health yourself

DRIVING

Things to think about

- **People who actively look for the best parking spot actually spend more time than people who take the first spot they see.** They also add to traffic congestion.
- **20 miles an hour is the fastest speed at which drivers can safely make eye contact with a pedestrian.** Eye contact helps you read another's intentions and avoid accidents.
- **Trying to communicate with other drivers is easily misinterpreted.** Honking your horn to show support for a bumper sticker could be taken as anger or frustration.
- **As a rule of thumb, the heavier the traffic, the less you gain by changing lanes.**
- **Intersections have 56 potential points for collisions,** according to experts. Roundabouts are much safer. They have only 16 potential collision points and eliminate dangerous left turns and entering an intersection at high speed.
- **The safety equipment on modern cars may lead people to underestimate the risk of driving.** Even with seat belts, anti-lock brakes, airbags, head restraints, and rear-window defoggers, 40,000 Americans die in automobile crashes every year.

Source: *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do and What It Says About Us*, by Tom Vanderbilt, Knopf Publishers

IN A BAD MOOD?

10 easy ways to lift your spirits

1. **Give yourself a compliment.** If you can't think of one, write down the 10 things you most admire about yourself.
2. **Keep a list of 10 of your happiest memories** — things that bring you joy when you recall them.
3. **Listen to uplifting music.**
4. **Plan to eat a healthy meal** and look forward to it throughout the day.
5. **Call someone** who makes you feel good.
6. **Get organized** and prioritize the most important tasks that need to get done first.
7. **Do something kind** for someone else.
8. **Take a walk** or do some other form of exercise.
9. **Find or create a special place** in your home or neighborhood that soothes you and visit that place often.
10. **Look for the humor,** fun, or something you enjoy in whatever you're doing.

Source: *Letting Go of What's Holding You Back: Maximize Your Happiness in Work, Love, and Life*, by Wayne M. Sotile, PhD, and Mary O. Sotile, MA, published by Stewart Tabori & Chang

A fun way to get kids to tidy up

Instead of nagging kids to pick up their junk, try this: Tell them that every time someone leaves an item out of its place (backpacks, sneakers, cereal bowls, purses, whatever) the item will be tagged and the culprit — even parents and adults — will have to pay a cash penalty.

All the cash, whether it's dimes, quarters, or even dollars, will go into a jar. At the end of the week, the person with the fewest infractions takes the pot.

Source: *Get Your Act Together: A 7-Day Get Organized Program for the Overworked, Overbooked, and Overwhelmed*, by Pam Young and Peggy Jones, published by Harper Collins

take care

What you need to know about stroke

If you or someone you are with shows signs of stroke, call 911 immediately instead of driving to the hospital.

People who arrive by ambulance are usually seen more quickly in emergency rooms. Claudette Brookes of the American Stroke Association strongly advises against people driving. "If something happens, and it is a very severe stroke, what are you going to do — stop the car and give CPR?"

The clot-dissolving treatment that can reduce brain damage from many strokes needs to be given within three hours.

Also make sure that you and your family members know these warning signs of stroke:

- **Sudden numbness** or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- **Sudden confusion**, trouble speaking or understanding
- **Sudden trouble seeing** with one or both eyes
- **Sudden trouble walking**, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- **Sudden, severe headache** with no known cause

Source: American Stroke Association, www.strokeassociation.org

SURFING THE INTERNET

How to find reliable health information

To use a popular word, the amount of health information on the Internet is well, **ginormous** (a combination of *gigantic* and *enormous*). But some sites are more helpful and healthful than others, says the Medical Library Association, an organization of professional health information specialists. Here are some of the sites they recommend:

- National Cancer Institute: www.cancer.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- American Academy of Family Physicians: www.familydoctor.org
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: www.healthfinder.gov
- Medem: an information partnership of medical societies: www.medem.com
- U.S. National Library of Medicine: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/
- Medical Library Association: www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html



January Health Observances



National Blood Donor Month

One pint of blood can save at least three lives, and the process typically takes about one hour.

To learn about how to host a blood drive at your work, church, or school, or to locate a blood bank near you, visit the American Association of Blood Banks at www.aabb.org.

Glaucoma Awareness

Glaucoma is often called the "*Sneak Thief of Sight*" because it typically has no symptoms in its early stages.

Anyone who may be at high risk for glaucoma, including African-Americans over age 40, anyone over age 60, and people with a family history of glaucoma, should have a comprehensive eye exam with dilated eyes at least every two years. Treating glaucoma early can help save vision. To learn more, visit the National Eye Institute at www.nei.nih.gov.

wellness

CREEPING WEIGHT GAIN

The 100 calorie difference

Eating just 100 fewer calories and burning 100 more calories every day may be enough to stop the average one- to two-pound weight gain most adults experience every year.

Simple ways to cut 100 calories that you'll never miss:

- **Replace** a cup of pasta or rice with a cup of vegetables.
- **Order** a 6-inch turkey or chicken sub instead of one made with tuna salad or cold cuts.
- **Have** a whole-grain English muffin instead of a large bagel or croissant.
- **Choose** vegetable soup instead of cream-based tomato or mushroom soup.
- **Snack** on vegetables and low-fat yogurt dip instead of chips and salsa.

To burn 100 extra calories: Add a 15 to 20-minute power walk to your daily activity; rake leaves or do yardwork for 30 minutes; take a 30-minute bicycle ride.

Sources: American Institute for Cancer Research; Good Housekeeping Research Institute

TWO KNEES, ONE LIFETIME

Protect your knees from overuse and injury

- **Aim for a healthy body weight** to take pressure off your knees.
- **Warm up before and after** any physical activity.
- **Do strength-building exercises for your legs and thighs** — the muscles that support and protect your knees.
- **Wear the proper shoes** for the activity you're doing.
- **High-impact activities that twist and turn the joints** — like running, tennis, racquetball, and basketball are more likely to cause knee injuries. Stretching, swimming, cycling, treadmill walking, and golf put less strain on the knees.
- **Kneel on one knee at a time and switch frequently** when doing tasks like gardening or scrubbing floors. Wearing knee pads can give you added protection.
- **Stop any activity that causes you pain, and avoid taking medication to cover up pain.** Check with your doctor about any ongoing problems or pain. When caught early, most knee problems can be successfully treated.

Sources: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; The Arthritis Foundation

